

The Rules of Reading

Hermeneutic Study Method

Question Everything, Learn Something, Answer Nothing: Euripides

Always Question everything for you never know what answers you will Find.

Always Questions everything. Use 5W and 1H

*“Everything was done to try and learn how to become a better basketball player. Everything. So when you have the point of view then literally the world becomes your library to help you become better at your craft... because you know what you want the world is giving you the information 100% because you know what you’re looking for.” **Kobe Bryant***

Once you know what it is in life that you want to do, then the world basically becomes your library. Everything you view, you can view from that perspective, which makes everything a learning asset for you.

Never Take Shortcuts that affect negatively my work quality. Take shortcuts that increase productivity, but not affect my work Quality.

Volume 10

Do Fewer Things: *Prioritize a limited number of significant tasks to reduce overload and enhance focus.*

Work at a Natural Pace: *Align your work rhythm with natural cycles, avoiding the pitfalls of constant urgency.*

Obsess Over Quality: *Commit to excellence in your endeavors, even if it means*

Cal Newport

Prefer to Do Your Own Research, rather ask Artificial Intelligence (AI). Artificial intelligence can be useful for Geographical facts. But, when it comes to serious research, you should not use it. If you are not expert on the topic, then simply do not comment without proper Research. **William Lane Craig**

Brain Like Muscle, The Harder You Use, The Stronger it Becomes.

"If You Don't Read Newspaper You are uninformed. If You Do Read It You Are Misinformed. What are the Responsibilities The Reporter Has? The Responsibility Of Reporter Is To Tell The Truth, Not Just To Be First, But To Tell The Truth. We Living In The Society, Where Just First Is Priority, who Cares, Just Get It Out There, Do Not Care Who Would It Hurts, Do Not Care Who Would Destroy, Do Not Care If It Is True, Just Say It And Sell It." **Denzel Washington**

If you want your name to be remembered after your death, either do things worth writing, or write things worth reading." **Benjamin Franklin.**

If You Don't Produce You Won't Thrive – No Matter How Skilled Or Talented You Are. Human beings, it seems, are at their best when immersed deeply in something challenging. If you service low-impact activities, therefore, you're taking away time you could be spending on higher-impact activities. Two Core Abilities for Thriving in the New Economy

1. *The ability to quickly master hard things.*
2. *The ability to produce at an elite level, in terms of both quality and speed.*

Cal Newport.

Books To Use For Hermeneutic Study Method

- Biblical Hermeneutics By Milton Terry
- Biblical Hermeneutics By Klein
- Hermeneutical Spiral By Grant Osbourne
- Hermeneutics Principles and Processes of Biblical -- Henry A. Virkler & Karelynne Ayayo
- How To Understand and Apply New Testament
- Use Any of the Hermeneutical analysis Books available to review the Bible

1. Hermeneutics as a Comprehensive Discipline

Understanding Hermeneutics as Both a Science and an Art

In *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Terry underscores the dual nature of hermeneutics, combining science's precision and objectivity with the artistry required to grasp deeper meanings. This balance is essential for responsible biblical interpretation, as it enables interpreters to engage rigorously with the text while remaining open to the emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions of Scripture.

- **Hermeneutics as a Science:** Hermeneutics as a science involves following structured methods to uncover a text's intended meaning. This scientific approach emphasizes grammatical analysis, historical background study, and careful use of interpretive tools like lexicons, concordances, and commentaries. Terry stresses the importance of understanding the Bible's original languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) and analyzing how words, phrases, and structures were used historically.

Examples of Scientific Hermeneutics:

- **Lexical Analysis in Greek and Hebrew:** In Greek, the word *logos* (meaning "word") has layered meanings, used in John 1:1 to describe Jesus as "the Word" (*logos*) of God. Through lexical analysis, interpreters discover that *logos* not only means "word" but also conveys the concept of divine reason or creative order, enriching the theological meaning of Christ's role in creation.
- **Historical-Cultural Analysis in Contextual Interpretation:** In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), understanding the hostility between Jews and Samaritans in first-century Palestine sheds light on the radical nature of Jesus' message on neighborly love.

- **Hermeneutics as an Art:** The artistic aspect of hermeneutics emphasizes creativity, empathy, and spiritual sensitivity. While the scientific approach grounds interpretation in analysis, the art of hermeneutics allows interpreters to connect with the deeper messages and emotional undertones within the text. Interpreting a poetic passage, for instance, requires an appreciation for metaphor and a sensitivity to the emotions it evokes.

Examples of Artistic Hermeneutics:

- **Interpretation of Symbolic Imagery in the Psalms:** In Psalm 23, David uses the image of God as a shepherd. An artistic interpretation considers not only the technical meaning of the words but also the comfort, protection, and intimate care implied in the metaphor, allowing readers to experience the emotional reassurance David conveys.
- **Parabolic Understanding in Jesus' Teachings:** Jesus' parables, like the Parable of the Lost Sheep, resonate on multiple levels—expressing God's love, forgiveness, and the value of each individual. The art of interpretation allows readers to feel the urgency of the shepherd searching for the lost sheep and grasp the depth of God's compassion for all His people.

Balancing Divine Inspiration and Literary Form

Terry asserts that while the Bible is divinely inspired, it is also a collection of texts rooted in human language, culture, and literary forms. This balance recognizes both the sacred authority of Scripture (its divine origin) and its literary craftsmanship (its human expression).

- **Divine Inspiration:** Divine inspiration implies that the Bible's messages are divinely guided and trustworthy. This belief impacts interpretation by encouraging reverence for the text's authority and its teachings on faith, ethics, and worship. Terry suggests that interpreters approach Scripture with a commitment to uncovering its spiritual truths, rooted in the understanding that God inspired each part of the Bible for the edification of humanity.

Implications of Divine Inspiration:

- **Scripture's Role in Doctrinal Authority:** Because of its divine inspiration, the Bible is viewed as a foundation for Christian beliefs and doctrines. Its teachings are binding, guiding both individuals and communities in faith and practice.
- **Perceived Unity Across Diverse Texts:** Divine inspiration also implies that, despite being written over centuries by multiple authors, the Bible has an internal consistency that reflects God's unified message. This unity is crucial in forming doctrines like salvation, forgiveness, and sanctification.
- **Human Literary Form:** Recognizing the Bible's human authorship and literary forms reminds interpreters to read each genre in the way it was intended. This understanding prevents misinterpretation, such as reading a metaphor as a literal statement or an apocalyptic vision as a factual description.

Example:

- **Poetic Language in Prophetic Visions:** In Isaiah 55:12, the prophet describes mountains and hills "bursting into song" and trees "clapping their hands." The poetic form here expresses creation's joyful response to God's redemptive work. Interpreting this literally would obscure the intended symbolic celebration.

The Interpreter's Role as Custodian of Meaning

Terry sees the interpreter as a custodian, entrusted with accurately uncovering and preserving the Bible's original meaning while conveying it in ways that are faithful and relevant.

- **Intellectual Diligence:** Intellectual diligence involves an in-depth study of the Bible's original languages, historical context, and literary structure. This commitment to rigorous research ensures that interpreters can fully understand the text's meaning, avoiding careless or surface-level interpretations.

Example: In the study of Jesus' parables, an interpreter practicing intellectual diligence might analyze first-century Jewish agricultural practices to understand parables about farming, sowing seeds, and harvesting. This study illuminates the practical and spiritual lessons Jesus conveyed to his audience.

- **Objectivity:** Objectivity requires that interpreters resist the urge to read their own biases into Scripture. This impartiality is especially vital when dealing with passages that address ethical or social issues, such as wealth, poverty, or justice. An objective interpreter carefully examines the text within its original context to avoid misapplying its message.

Example: In interpreting teachings on wealth, such as Jesus' statement "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25), an objective interpreter would consider cultural attitudes toward wealth in the ancient world rather than projecting modern economic assumptions.

- **Spiritual Discernment:** Terry emphasizes that, as a divinely inspired text, the Bible often requires spiritual discernment, meaning an openness to the Holy Spirit's guidance. This spiritual insight is particularly useful in interpreting passages that deal with profound theological themes or complex moral teachings.

Example: When interpreting Jesus' command to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44), an interpreter practicing spiritual discernment will recognize that this command challenges conventional ethics. The interpreter considers the transformative potential of this teaching, allowing the radical nature of Jesus' message to stand unaltered.

2. Core Principles of Interpretation

Distinguishing Between Literal and Figurative Language

Distinguishing literal from figurative language is fundamental in biblical hermeneutics. Misinterpretation of these forms can lead to doctrinal confusion or ethical misapplications.

- **Literal Language:** Literal language is used to convey facts, events, or doctrinal teachings intended to be taken at face value. The literal sense is typically found in historical narratives, legal texts, and didactic teachings.

Examples:

- **Historical Narratives:** The account of Jesus' crucifixion in the Gospels is presented as a literal, historical event central to Christian faith.
- **Moral Commandments:** Commands like "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15) are literal ethical guidelines meant to guide moral behavior.
- **Figurative Language:** Figurative language is prevalent in biblical poetry, prophecy, and parables. It uses metaphor, simile, hyperbole, and other figures of speech to communicate spiritual truths or abstract concepts.

Examples:

- **Metaphor:** Jesus refers to Himself as "the bread of life" (John 6:35). This metaphor illustrates the spiritual sustenance He provides rather than literal bread.
- **Hyperbole:** Jesus' instruction to "cut off your hand" if it causes sin (Matthew 5:30) is hyperbolic, emphasizing the gravity of sin without advocating literal self-mutilation.
- **Symbolism in Apocalyptic Literature:** In Revelation, symbols like the "Beast" represent broader forces or political powers. Understanding these symbols involves examining the historical and cultural context of first-century apocalyptic literature.

Grammatical Context

Grammatical context involves examining the sentence structure, syntax, and verb tense within the Bible's original languages. These grammatical elements often carry nuances that can significantly impact interpretation.

- **Verb Tense and Aspect:** Greek verbs have tenses and aspects that convey not only the time but also the type of action. The present tense often implies a continuous or ongoing action, which can shape the understanding of ethical or doctrinal statements.

Example: In John 15:4, Jesus says, "Abide in me, and I in you." The Greek verb *meno* (to abide) is in the present tense, indicating an ongoing, active relationship rather than a one-time act. This understanding influences the doctrine of discipleship as a continual commitment.

- **Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry:** Hebrew poetry, often found in Psalms and Proverbs, relies heavily on parallelism. Recognizing parallel structures helps interpreters see how ideas are mirrored, contrasted, or expanded.

Example: In Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it," the parallel structure reinforces God's ownership over creation, underscoring His authority and sovereignty.

- **Syntax and Emphasis in Hebrew:** Hebrew syntax is flexible, and word order can emphasize certain words or ideas. Recognizing these shifts in syntax helps highlight the text's main point.

Example: In the opening of Genesis 1:1, the phrase "In the beginning, God" places God at the forefront, emphasizing His role as the ultimate originator and creator.

Historical and Cultural Context

Understanding historical and cultural context prevents modern readers from misinterpreting ancient practices and values. Each book of the Bible reflects the customs, political landscape, and religious environment of its time.

- **Israelite Culture and Customs:** Many Old Testament laws and customs reflect the ancient Near Eastern culture of Israel. Understanding these practices helps interpreters appreciate the ethical and theological principles underlying the laws.

Example: The concept of the "jubilee year" (Leviticus 25) reflects an economic reset designed to prevent generational poverty and promote equality. Recognizing this context highlights Israel's commitment to social justice within its covenant with God.

- **Greco-Roman Influence:** The New Testament was written within a Greco-Roman context, where Roman law, Greek philosophy, and Jewish religious practices intersected. Recognizing these influences clarifies the social dynamics that shaped early Christian teachings.

Example: Paul's use of the term "redemption" (Greek: *apolutrosis*) in Romans 3:24 draws on both the Jewish concept of ransom and the Roman practice of freeing slaves. Understanding this background enriches the theological meaning of salvation as both liberation and a new life of freedom in Christ.

Scripture Interprets Scripture

The *analogia fidei* (analogy of faith) principle asserts that the Bible, as a unified whole, interprets itself. Difficult or unclear passages can be clarified by examining other parts of Scripture.

- **Examples of Using Scripture to Clarify Scripture:**
 - **Faith and Works:** James' teaching that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26) complements Paul's emphasis on salvation by faith in Romans. Reading both together shows that works demonstrate genuine faith without conflicting with the doctrine of salvation by grace.
 - **God's Character:** In the Old Testament, God's justice is often highlighted (e.g., in the prophets), while the New Testament emphasizes His mercy (e.g., Luke 6:36). Interpreting these together reveals a balanced portrayal of God's character.

Theological Coherence

Theological coherence requires that interpretations align with core biblical doctrines, avoiding contradictions and maintaining consistency in key theological themes.

- **Examples of Theological Coherence:**
 - **God's Nature:** The Bible portrays God as both loving and just, with each attribute balancing the other. Maintaining this coherence prevents an overemphasis on one attribute, resulting in a holistic view of God's character.

3. Steps for Biblical Interpretation

Step 1: Identify the Literary Genre

Recognizing genre establishes a framework for how to interpret a text. Each genre has distinct conventions, guiding readers in their interpretive approach.

- **Genres and Their Characteristics:**
 - **Historical Narrative:** Books like Genesis, Exodus, and Acts are generally read as literal accounts, documenting events and shaping theological history.
 - **Prophecy and Apocalyptic Literature:** Prophetic and apocalyptic texts like Isaiah and Revelation use symbolic language to convey messages about God's justice and redemptive plan.
 - **Wisdom Literature:** Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job contain general truths rather than rigid rules, providing guidance for ethical and philosophical reflection.
 - **Epistles:** Paul's letters address specific church issues, requiring attention to logical flow, argumentation, and cultural context.

Step 2: Analyze the Original Language

Studying the Bible's original languages uncovers nuances that may be lost in translation.

- **Tools and Techniques:**
 - **Lexicons:** Lexicons provide meanings and cultural insights into biblical terms.
 - **Interlinear Bibles:** These display the original language alongside English, helping interpreters examine syntax.
 - **Concordances:** Concordances track specific words, showing their thematic use across Scripture.

Step 3: Evaluate Historical and Cultural Context

Historical and cultural context ensures interpretations are faithful to the text's original setting.

- **Examples:**
 - **Marriage Customs:** In Genesis 29, Jacob's marriage arrangements reflect the importance of family alliances and inheritance, which shaped social structures.
 - **Roman Influence on Paul's Writings:** Paul's appeals to Roman citizenship (Acts 22) show his strategic use of legal rights in spreading the gospel.

Step 4: Consider Immediate Literary Context

Examining a verse within its literary context prevents isolated misinterpretations.

- **Example:**
 - **Philippians 4:13:** "I can do all things" is about finding strength in contentment, not unlimited capability.

Step 5: Synthesize with Broader Scriptural Teachings

A comprehensive study across Scripture provides a holistic understanding of doctrines.

- **Example:**
 - **Justice and Mercy:** Studying these attributes across both Testaments highlights God's balanced nature.

Step 6: Identify Application for Contemporary Readers

Application translates ancient principles for today.

- **Example:**
 - **Sabbath Rest:** Sabbath principles of rest and renewal remain relevant, though exact observance may vary culturally.

4. Addressing Complex and Difficult Passages

- **Symbolism and Typology:** Recognizing types, such as Moses as a prefigurement of Christ, connects Testaments.
- **Parables:** The Good Samaritan emphasizes universal love without over-interpreting details.

5. Practical Exercises for Hermeneutical Practice

- **Word and Thematic Studies:**
 - **Word Studies:** Explore “faith” or “redemption” across Scripture.
 - **Thematic Studies:** Trace covenant themes from Genesis to Revelation.

6. Common Pitfalls in Interpretation

- **Avoiding Eisegesis:** Avoid imposing modern biases onto ancient texts.
- **Balancing Tradition and Text:** Tradition can inform but should not override Scripture.

7. Applying Hermeneutics in Theological Formation

- **Doctrine Formation:** Hermeneutics grounds doctrine in Scripture.
- **Preaching and Teaching:** Hermeneutics ensures accurate, relevant teaching.
- **Personal Devotion:** Deepens engagement with Scripture, fostering spiritual growth.